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Boudewijn, Petra

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# **‘You Must Have Inherited This Trait from Your Eurasian Mother’: The Representation of Mixed-race Characters in Dutch Colonial Literature**

PETRA BOUDEWIJN

*University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands*

This article addresses the portrayal of Eurasians, descendants from interracial relationships between colonizer and colonized, in nineteenth-century Dutch literature set in colonial Indonesia. As racial in-between group, Eurasians occupied a complex position within colonial society. The European community in the Dutch East Indies was a widely differentiated group that consisted of both white Europeans (i.e. ‘racially pure’) and Eurasians (racially mixed). Although equal before the law, in colonial imagination, an opposition existed between these two groups. The colonial representation of Eurasians is examined in two then widely read novels that take on opposite views on miscegenation: *Ups & Downs of Life in the Indies* (1890) written by Maurits (pseudonym of Dutch author P. A. Daum) and *Fernand* (1874) by Melati van Java (pseudonym of Eurasian writer Marie Sloodt). In this article, it is argued that Eurasians are depicted as so-called blurred copies of white Europeans. As such, they assume a double role: on the one hand, they confirm the alleged superiority of white Europeans; on the other hand, they pose a threat to the whites’ position in the colony. Furthermore, the cultural context, from which these novels emerged, and the role literature plays within this framework is reflected upon.

**KEYWORDS** Eurasians, Dutch colonial literature, Dutch East Indies, mixed race, postcolonial studies

## Introduction

'I cannot stand your sulking, only Eurasian children do that, you must have inherited that from your mother,' says the Dutch Mrs Van Vaerne to her granddaughter Theodore in *Fernand*, a novel by Melati van Java written in 1874, set in colonial Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> Theodore was born to a Eurasian mother and Dutch father.<sup>2</sup> To her grandmother, it is beyond doubt that her negative traits, such as sulking, are the result of miscegenation.

In the nineteenth century, various personal characteristics were considered hereditary and were attributed to racial factors. Race was considered a biological category, and deemed a causal factor for a person's pathology. Terms, such as 'half-blood' and 'mixed blooded' for offspring from interracial relationships were widely used and denote the concept's association with biology and pathology.<sup>3</sup> Every race was associated with certain characteristics, and races were ordered and evaluated hierarchically. The white race was 'naturally' considered to be on top of the racial order, whereas the other races were assigned subordinate positions. The racially pure, however, were at all times held to be superior to descendants from mixed-race relationships who — just as the Eurasian Theodore in the eyes of her grandmother — were seen as a form of racial deterioration. Such ideological images of race and miscegenation strongly determined the perception of Eurasians. However, these images tell more about the perceiver than about the perceived. Eurasian, as a social category, could only emerge in the context of the Dutch colonial enterprise in the Indies, and these imaginations were fed by the colonizer's fear of degeneration and loss of colonial supremacy.<sup>4</sup>

Eurasians occupied a complex position in the colonial society of the Dutch East Indies. Contrary to the British in colonial India,<sup>5</sup> the Dutch colony had known a long tradition of legally acknowledging Eurasian children. This practice resulted in the Nationality law at the end of the nineteenth century which stipulated that every person descending from a European received the European status — as opposed to being considered a native.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, Eurasians and white Europeans were equal before the law, and they both belonged to the European community in the Indies.<sup>7</sup> Notwithstanding their legal equality, Eurasians formed a complicated category in terms of colonial imagination — a discourse that was mostly constructed along racial borderlines.<sup>8</sup> Due to its conceptual opposition to racial purity — a notion that was used as vindication for the European supremacy in the East, and that, by definition, could not be embodied by people of mixed-race descent — Eurasian, as a social category, served as a safeguard for the alleged superiority of the white race. Simultaneously, Eurasians undermined the link between European racial purity and social hegemony because of their presence in the European community. Consequently, they had a disruptive influence on the colonial discourse and the ideas underlying it.

Literature, as the sediment of racial views on the one hand, and as a performative force on the other, played an important role in colonial imagination.<sup>9</sup> In the second half of the nineteenth century, literature from the Dutch East Indies became an integral part of Dutch literary life and was widely read and discussed. Literary texts assumed an important role within the colonial discourse, and they became an important mediator

for colonial society to represent itself and to be represented.<sup>10</sup> The so-called Indies novel even became a literary genre that comprised hundreds of titles, with its peak around the turn of the century.<sup>11</sup> Dutch literary criticism considered Indies novels to be of a 'non-literary character' and claimed that the genre as such showed 'such an unvarnished picture of the [Indies] reality'.<sup>12</sup> These novels were then looked upon as a source of 'knowledge' about colonial life, and the ideological representations embedded in this literature form a long-lasting literary discourse that has strongly shaped the perception of the Indies. In his essay 'Romancing the Indies', Joost Coté has argued that the colonial novel functioned as 'an important vehicle of communication not only within colonial society but also between the colony and the motherland, and thus played an important role in communicating and shaping attitudes'.<sup>13</sup> In particular in shaping attitudes towards race and miscegenation, I would add.

In this article, I intend to examine the literary portrayal of Eurasians and the underlying ideological notions regarding miscegenation. I will do so by presenting two case studies on Dutch colonial literature. I chose two novels that are situated in the same era and social environment, to wit the colonial elite in the second half of the nineteenth century. However, the authors of these novels — two well-known writers at that time with a large reading public — each take quite a different view on Eurasians. The first novel was written by a Dutch author: *Ups & Downs of Life in the Indies* (1890) by Maurits (pseudonym of P. A. Daum); the second by a Eurasian author: *Fernand* (1874) by Melati van Java (pseudonym of Marie Sloom). Before discussing these cases, I will consider the social standing of Eurasians in colonial society, ideas about race and miscegenation in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the way in which such representations can be explored within the context of literary studies.

## Eurasians in Dutch colonial history

Eurasians were already present in the time of the *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (the Dutch East India Company). In the early days of the colony, a partnership between a Dutch man and a native woman — usually in the form of concubinage — was encouraged. The idea was that the Dutch male would not only visit the colony, but would settle there permanently. Therefore, it was important that he would *verindischen* (turn Indies)<sup>14</sup> as quickly as possible. A native woman was considered the perfect means to this end: she would ensure his bond to the country and could quickly familiarize him with the colonial society. Not every Eurasian, however, was born from a partnership between a Dutch man and his native concubine. Anyone with some sort of Asian ancestry was labelled Eurasian. Hence, Eurasian could denote a child of a white (European-born or locally born) father and Eurasian mother; a Eurasian father and native mother; a Eurasian father and white mother; or two Eurasian parents. Accordingly, Eurasians were a very heterogeneous group, and they had spread over all layers of colonial society. Hence, they were not bound to one particular social class or rank, and they could be found in the colonial elite as well as in the *kampong* (compound, or native village). Therefore, in

*Being “Dutch” in The Indies* (2008), Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben aim to dismiss the widespread false notion:

that *Indische* families formed a racially, culturally and socially homogeneous community between *Totoks* (European newcomers) and the indigenous population, as well as the cliché that, as a group, they were a kind of marginalised Europeans.<sup>15</sup>

Eurasians constituted a very large group in the society of the Dutch East Indies: between 1870 and 1900 the majority of the European population in the Indies was considered Eurasian.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, it was popular among Dutch men to wed Eurasian daughters from higher circles. Their families often had important connections within the colony, and, therefore, taking a Eurasian wife was not only a way to quickly familiarize a Dutch man with colonial society, it also provided the newcomers with favourable career-opportunities in the colony.<sup>17</sup> Besides, the environment of the Indies was thought to be unsuitable for the Dutch female spouse: she would get homesick, the tropical climate would sap her health, and she could conceivably take offence at the customs and habits of the Indies.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, for a long time, Eurasians had occupied a prominent position within colonial society, and from this so-called Indies clan system, an influential and prosperous Eurasian elite had emerged over the course of the centuries, as Jean Gelman Taylor has demonstrated in *The Social World of Batavia* (1987).<sup>19</sup>

In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the orientation of the newcomers changed. The *totok* had no intention to stay but came to the Indies to earn as much money as possible in a relatively short period of time before returning to the Netherlands. This reorientation was connected with several historical developments that made a temporary residence in the Indies possible and easier. In 1870 for example, the so-called *cultuurstelsel* (a system of forced farming, implemented by the government) was abolished, opening up the Indies for European private enterprises for the first time. Consequently, migration to the colony increased. Furthermore, the distance and travelling time between motherland and colony were shortened by the opening of the Suez-canal in 1869 and the replacement of the sailing ship by the steamboat which reduced the journey to or from the Netherlands to six weeks instead of two and a half months. In addition, modern means of communication such as telegraphy made contact between the Netherlands and the Indies much simpler. As a result, slowly but surely the Indies were no longer seen as a colony to which one emigrated, but as a temporary residency.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, it became important to remain as ‘Dutch’ as possible, and *verindischen* became a sign of social and moral decline — the verb itself becoming synonymous to ‘degenerating’.<sup>21</sup> To prevent falling prey to any degenerative lures, newcomers preferably left for the colony already married, or had a wife come over at a later time (so-called ‘marrying by proxy’). From 1880 onwards, the number of European women slowly increased, a demographic change which can be primarily attributed to the arrival of Dutch brides in the colony.<sup>22</sup>

With the shift in cultural orientation and the increasing number of white women, colonial society *verhollandste* (became ‘westernized’ — the opposite of *verindischen*). The Dutch wife became preferable to a Eurasian wife or native concubine, and a marriage between two *totoks* was considered as the symbol of civilization. Because of the growing

number of white women in the colony, the group of Eurasians within the colonial elite became smaller. To an increasing extent, they ended up in the lower classes or ranks, as a result of which the centuries-old mestizo culture — in which Indies clans were salient — slowly but surely had to make room for a white elite-culture.<sup>23</sup> Ann Laura Stoler argues in *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (2002) that the arrival of large numbers of white brides played a central role in the changing racial attitudes towards the end of the century. According to Stoler, white women became the ‘bearers of a new colonial morality’ and were considered key to the preservation of European prestige in the tropics: on the one hand, the Dutch wife was deemed a means in the battle against *verindischen* (of their husbands and children); on the other hand, she became the keeper of the white race and its supposed superior qualities because she could prevent ‘pollution’ of European bloodlines (on which I will elaborate later on).<sup>24</sup> This metropolis imposed new colonial morality was thus firmly grounded in notions of racial hygiene and led, in combination with other newly emerging European ideas about family values and motherhood, to a negative evaluation of mixed marriage and miscegenation.<sup>25</sup>

However, in the aforementioned study, Bosma and Raben contest Stoler’s view on the role of race in the colonial Indonesia. In colonial historiography, they argue, ‘often excessive emphasis’ is put on racial characteristics, hence, this emphasis accentuates discursive mechanisms sustaining the metropolitan frame of reference by which the colony used to be imagined, ‘while other factors, such as class, gender, education, culture and local conditions — arguably equally significant — are neglected or ignored’.<sup>26</sup> They demonstrate that many Eurasians climbed the social ladder and occupied high positions in colonial society. In colonial everyday life, social identifiers were entwined in a complex way, and a person’s social standing was not primarily defined by race but by a combination of factors, such as class, wealth and education.<sup>27</sup> Reaffirming this notion, Raben wrote in a recent response to Stoler:

Due to the presence of many upper-class Eurasians, both in the government and as agricultural entrepreneurs, and the fairly high degree of social mobility, the issue of race was extremely blurred in Java’s colonial situation, which makes it a much more challenging issue than a simple case of dominant white racism.<sup>28</sup>

I tend to agree with Bosma and Raben. However, colonial practice (conducted in the Indies) and colonial imagination (to a large extent produced and imposed by the metropolis) are not one and the same thing, and they show different patterns. Although the colony had produced many honourable, respectable Eurasian citizens who were part of the colonial elite, the fear of racial deterioration and of loss of white supremacy brought about by miscegenation was widespread in the nineteenth century and will be discussed in the next paragraph.<sup>29</sup>

## Race and miscegenation

When it comes to colonial imagination, I tend to concur with Stoler who has dedicated her career to the study of ‘social imaginaries’. These ideological mental images shape the

‘emotional economies and sensory regimes’ that foster the instinctively drawn dividing lines between social groups.<sup>30</sup> Hence, I share her view of colonial imagination as being shaped by a highly politicized set of metropolitan beliefs on white supremacy that thrived on imaginary fears of racial deterioration. Since the Dutch East Indies did not have official rules against mixed marriage or miscegenation, matrimonial and procreative choices were left to the individual.<sup>31</sup> These choices were heavily influenced by such social imaginaries in which race was paramount. Indies novels had a significant role in the production of colonial imagination, since they were both a reflection and a commentary on life in the tropics, with strong moralistic overtones.<sup>32</sup> Colonial novelists were very much preoccupied with race.<sup>33</sup> In Indies novels, for instance, skin tone is often a determinant factor for the way a character is portrayed. Who weds and beds whom, in terms of race and miscegenation, generally determines the course of a character’s life. Therefore, the literary representation of the Indies cannot be separated from the racial mindset that gained momentum in the metropolis during the course of the nineteenth century.

In this era, European thinking became ‘biologized’ to a large degree, and numerous scientific studies were published under the flag of ethnography, eugenics or social-darwinism.<sup>34</sup> In these fields of study, distinguishing traits of human types were examined, various taxonomic hierarchies were formulated, and elements from genetics and evolutionism were used to scientifically ground various racist statements. In this way, racial notions developed, and most of them advocated the necessity of a pure white race. The breeding ground for such ideas was fear that the supposedly superior white race would be weakened, and that colonial supremacy would be disrupted as a consequence.<sup>35</sup> Although, race was seen as a biological category, it was also perceived as being influenced by socio-historical factors. A salient and influential position was the theory of evolution by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744–1829) and his principles of genetics and inheritance. He argued that race was not only determined by innate and inalienable biological features but also comprised acquired characteristics, behaviour and skills of ancestors which could be genetically transferred to their descendants. In this way, socio-historical circumstances could be seamlessly integrated into popular accounts of genetic determination, resulting in a more complex notion of race, that could also contain class, rank, sex, or even nationality. Thus, biological and ethnological notions fluently melted into one another, and as a result, different skin colours could be easily translated into different degrees of morality and civilization. Therefore, in the course of the nineteenth century, race became a marker of civilization in most European nations.<sup>36</sup> This view was also reflected in metropolitan newspapers and weeklies. For example, a local newspaper from Arnhem reported that race entailed far more than skin colour:

If [skin] colour were only *colour*. But the colour is not only *the colour*, the black and the yellow man are of *a different race* than the white man. In mental faculties and powers of reason, the coloured man is far beneath the white.<sup>37</sup>

With the growing popularity of biological and evolutionary accounts of social phenomena, races were classified according to a certain hierarchy. Notions advocating a hierarchical racial order grew more and more elaborate and were scientifically grounded



by various theories of evolution that sprang up in the nineteenth century, such as the theory of Charles Darwin (1809–1882).<sup>38</sup> Evolution was considered an upward trend from ‘wild’ to ‘civilized’ species, a process from which the white race emerged at the top with irrefutable naturalness. This racial hierarchy became an important legitimization of colonization. Furthermore, the biologization of social power structures also had an impact on the legitimization of colonization. Being on top of the racial hierarchy also came with a moral obligation: *The White Man’s Burden*, an expression borrowed from Rudyard Kipling’s poem written in 1899, gained international recognition as the symbol and legitimacy of the colonial enterprise. Colonization was understood as the moral duty of the ‘civilized’ white race to civilize the ‘less evolved’ races. In that way, evolutionary thinking was not only used to prove the supposed superiority of Europeans, but also to legitimate their colonial presence in the East on scientific grounds, masking imperialistic and economic causes with moral and pedagogic motives.<sup>39</sup> Many Dutch, in fact, believed that it was their duty to lead the way for the coloured races. This interpretation of colonization became widely spread around the turn of century. For instance, S. R. Steinmetz, a well-known ethnologist, stated in the popular weekly *De Gids*: ‘Our intentional, pedagogical intervention could certainly be a factor in the history of mankind, and, therefore, we are obliged to provide this education [to the coloured races]. We, the Dutch, have a colossal task to fulfil in this respect’.<sup>40</sup>

In this context, miscegenation constituted a problematic phenomenon. Mixing the white race with less evolved races was considered a step backwards in evolutionary terms. Hence, miscegenation was considered as tantamount to degeneration.<sup>41</sup> Supposedly, miscegenation had not only a negative impact on the merit the white race, but also on the race that the white race would mix with. It was assumed that every race in its pure form would at least possess some positive qualities: Europeans for example were intelligent, rational and civilized; and the native population was pure, strong and healthy. The negative qualities of one race, however, were comprised of the opposites of the other race’s positive qualities: for instance, artificial, physically weak and unhealthy were negative characteristics describing Europeans, while ignorant, wild and uncivilized were used to refer to indigenous people in a negative way. In the case of racial mixture, people believed that only negative racial qualities would come up in future generations and that all the positive racial qualities would irrevocably be lost. Miscegenation was thus considered an evolutionary no-win situation, and mixed-race offspring would only inherit the worst characteristics from both sides of their ancestry.<sup>42</sup> The Dutch ethnologist W. H. Cox for example, linked miscegenation directly to evolutionary degeneration in the widely read *Tweemaandelijksch Tijdschrift voor Letteren, Kunst, Wetenschap en Politiek*: ‘The low stage, where so many mongrels are, is partly a result of reversion to a wild state, brought about by crossbreeding’.<sup>43</sup> He strongly dismissed social factors as an explanation for the living conditions of underprivileged ‘mongrels’ and questioned their mental and moral faculties instead.

Miscegenation would thus irrevocably weaken the allegedly superior white race, or could, after generations of crossbreeding, even cross out the European element entirely — creating subjects who were Europeans in name but natives in pathology. In this sense,



miscegenation posed a serious threat to the colonial power balance, or as it was argued by the *Arnhemse Courant*:

The predominance of whites is exclusively maintained by the constant supply of fresh European ingredients. The natives are overgrowing the European element and would suffocate it, if this European element would not be supplemented, refreshed, preserved and kept strong by a continuous import [of whites].<sup>44</sup>

This was not an isolated racist statement by a random metropolitan newspaper, but reflected the scientific social-darwinist attitudes of that day. Miscegenation did not only put the colonial project at stake, but even the future of mankind. In the aforementioned article, Cox pleaded for careful consideration before procreating, because: ‘the stronger the procreative choice, the higher does the average of humankind rise’.<sup>45</sup> Steinmetz was convinced that ‘an amalgamated mankind to me almost certainly means an impoverishing civilization, a weakening of human life’.<sup>46</sup> With such statements scientists directly intervened in colonial matrimonial choices, urging Dutchmen only to marry white women: not just for the success of the colonial project but for the sake of humanity.

To sum up, ideas about degeneration and erosion of colonial supremacy were streamlined with views on racial inequality and the negative notion of miscegenation. This was a disadvantageous development for Eurasians: in colonial imagination, they were considered to be degenerate subjects, and in the context of the predominant evolutionary-colonial discourse, they were moved to the rear end of the racial hierarchy, even in comparison with the native population — who could at least claim pure origins and some positively valued racial qualities. Therefore, Eurasians were usually associated with negative traits and characteristics that underlined their supposed inferiority. Furthermore, many metropolitan ideas on racial hygiene were also picked up and spread by Indies newspapers and weeklies. For example, by the turn of century, *De Sumatra Post* stated that every new generation of Eurasians ‘looked more lank and sickly than their parents’ and that ‘they do not have the virtues, only the vices of both races’.<sup>47</sup> Such descriptions emphasized the alleged overall increasing degeneration of mixed offspring and perpetuated, to paraphrase Stoler, the emotional economy of race.

## Eurasians and postcolonial studies

The branch of literary studies occupying itself with the analysis of colonial texts — among other things — is called postcolonial studies. In this field of study, following the founder of the discipline Edward W. Said (1935–2003),<sup>48</sup> a literary text is treated as a construction of social differences and the way in which these differences are produced and reproduced is studied. For a long time, binary oppositions such as white versus black, colonizer versus colonized, and the East versus the West were central in postcolonial literary research. The literary representation of Eurasians, however, cannot be described by these binary oppositions, because Eurasians as racial in-between group were seen as European *and* as Asian at the same time — as their assigned name clearly shows. Internationally, postcolonial literary scholars have developed a number of concepts to study cultural

hybrids, such as ‘hybridity’ and ‘transculturation’, which describe the emergence of new forms of culture and identity from two different discourses, to wit that of the colonizer and the colonized.<sup>49</sup> These concepts are often used in a highly emancipatory sense, e.g. in cases where hybridity and transculturation lead to subversion and rejection of the colonial discourse by the suppressed group. As we will see, this is not the case in the novels from the Dutch East Indies that are discussed here: the Eurasian characters as members of the European community do not problematize the colonial system or the metropolitan standard of civilization at all, but rather take them for granted — as part of the colonizing group in the Indies, Eurasians were usually loyal to the colonial ethos. Accordingly, these postcolonial concepts that focus on emancipation and subversion appear to be unsuitable for the analysis of these literary works.

Other postcolonial concepts appear to be more helpful. I would like to use the notion of ‘mimicry’ and ‘blurred copy’ by Homi K. Bhabha.<sup>50</sup> In Bhabha’s terms, mimicry<sup>51</sup> describes the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized. A similar ambivalent relationship exists between white Europeans and Eurasians. Eurasians belonged to the European community; yet, they were not perceived as equal to white Europeans (especially *totoks*). They constituted so-called doubles within this group: subjects who try to mimic white Europeans, or to be more specific, subjects who try to mimic the metropolitan ideal of civilization (a highly idealized fantasy of what Dutch (wo)men in terms of features, values and conduct should be like). Eurasians often only partly succeed in their mimesis, and their perceived ‘level’ of civilization is often closely connected to their skin tone. As a result, they constitute a blurred copy of the ‘original’ European ideal, and Asian elements filter through into the European colonial discourse. In Dutch colonial novels in which the indigenous population hardly plays a role of any importance and, for example, only serves to illustrate the colonial setting, this demarcation line between white Europeans and Eurasians is sharply drawn — as we shall see in both case studies. In these cases, Eurasian characters resemble Dutch (wo)men in many ways, but they are nevertheless represented as ‘other’ or, in the words of Bhabha, as ‘almost the same but not quite/white’.<sup>52</sup> Due to their double role, Eurasians form a complex group in Dutch colonial imagination: on the one hand, they constitute a confirmation of white superiority; on the other hand, they pose a threat to white supremacy and the colonizer’s superior position in the Indies.

Research on Eurasians increased during the first decade of the twenty-first century, because they became part of a larger field of interest for so-called *Indische Nederlanders* (a large category which denotes Dutch people with a family history in colonial Indonesia).<sup>53</sup> However, according to some scholars, Dutch postcolonial studies has largely remained in its infancy. Gert Oostindie noticed in *Postkoloniaal Nederland* (2010) that Dutch historians have hardly followed in the footsteps of anglo- or francophone postcolonial scholars, and that they have not (yet) developed a tradition of postcolonial critique of their own.<sup>54</sup> More recently, Elleke Boehmer and Sarah de Mul in *The Postcolonial Low Countries* (2012), criticized literary scholars within Dutch academia for neglecting critical postcolonial perspectives:

Scholars working in Dutch departments in the world outside the Low Countries [...] have generally speaking made greater efforts than their counterparts in the Netherlands and Belgium to open their courses and research activities to non-metropolitan neerlandophone cultures and literatures.<sup>55</sup>

Although this is perhaps a political and certainly arguable statement, the authors advocate a common goal: critical reflection from a neerlandophone perspective in order to develop a Dutch postcolonial critique that relates to the ongoing international postcolonial debate, but that critically engages with postcolonial theories and concepts from a Dutch cultural context.<sup>56</sup> By applying and adjusting Bhabha's ideas to literary texts from a neerlandophone context, I will demonstrate how authors of colonial literature dealt with Eurasians and their ambivalent position between the East and the West. With this endeavour, I seek to contribute to the (emerging) field of Dutch postcolonial studies.

### Maurits' metropolitan-naturalist perspective

The first literary text I want to discuss is *Ups & Downs of Life in the Indies* (1890) by Maurits, pseudonym of the white Dutch writer P. A. Daum (1850–1898). Daum was born in the Netherlands but rose to fame as a journalist and novelist in the Dutch East Indies. His novels were originally published in serial form in Indies newspapers which granted him access to and made him popular among a large reading public. He was the focal point of late nineteenth-century Dutch literary criticism which considered him to be the leading colonial novelist of his day.<sup>57</sup> In his literary work, Daum — as he himself stated — wanted to represent the society of the Indies as 'objectively' as possible.<sup>58</sup> In an article I published earlier, I explained his view on Eurasians in his journalistic work as well as in his literary work. I argued that, although Daum repeatedly broke a lance for Eurasians in his life as a journalist — for example, he provided job opportunities for underprivileged Eurasians at the Indies newspaper he owned — his literary works paradoxically reflect the racist colonial attitudes of that day.<sup>59</sup> *Ups & Downs* recounts the lives of two Eurasian families, Uhlstra and Lugtens, that both belong to the colonial elite. The first part of the novel describes the rise, the second part the decline of both families. The naturalist novel gives an accurate account of the course of events that inevitably lead to the ruin of the two families. Through a combination of hereditary qualities and circumstances, the Eurasian characters unavoidably are brought to ruin, socially as well as morally.<sup>60</sup> The circumstances in this are determined by the Indies environment — the climate and culture of which influence both body and mind of those residing there.

The two families are connected to each other by two sisters: Lena, who is married to Uhlstra, and Clara, who is married to Lugtens. They have a Dutch father and a native mother. The European and native influences, however, have not equally asserted themselves in the sisters: Lena is described as being 'precisely like a native woman' in terms of her looks as well as her behaviour, whereas Clara is portrayed as a 'pretty Indies lady'.<sup>61</sup> Lena appears to be more Indies or even native than European, and she is represented as a 'stout figure in a wide baggy *kabaya* [linen (house)coat]' who speaks 'Dutch just as fluently as she speaks it incorrectly'.<sup>62</sup> Clara, however, in her elegant European dresses,

has a pleasant, handsome appearance and speaks only with a 'slight local accent'.<sup>63</sup> She too, however, suffers from moral and social decline: she has a passion for gambling and for men. She makes considerable gambling debts and has an extramarital affair.<sup>64</sup> Both sisters belong to the European community, but they do not possess the morally superior qualities generally attributed to European-born whites, such as morality, manners and self-control. They are first and foremost Indies characters, and their mimicry of European values (in which Clara is more successful than her sister) only allows them to achieve a certain degree, but not the full ideal of European civilization. Therefore, they merely represent blurred copies of white Europeans.

To what extent Eurasian characters are depicted as Indies or European strongly depends on the colour of their skin. In this novel, this feature is considered the primary sign of civilization. This is mainly reflected in the sisters' daughters: Roos Uhlstra and Lena Lugtens, respectively. Roos, who has a dark-skinned Eurasian mother *and* father, is presented as the sum of Indies influences only. There is no difference between her and a native girl. Her desired first husband, for instance, considers the following, when a marriage with Roos is suggested: 'if he then really would want to take one *thát* dark, she could be found much easier and less expensive among the native population [as a concubine]'.<sup>65</sup> She talks, eats and dresses as if she were a native, and a marriage with her means 'the prospect of the *kampong*'.<sup>66</sup> Lena, on the other hand, has a light-skinned Eurasian mother and a Dutch father, and is represented 'without any trace of native origin on the maternal side'.<sup>67</sup> She talks, eats and dresses Dutch, and her 'beautiful blonde hair', 'big deep-blue eyes' and 'pinkish-white fair-haired' appearance are continually emphasized by the narrator.<sup>68</sup> In contrast to Roos, who has only inherited Indies or even native characteristics, in Lena that heritage has been nullified.

The role the Eurasian characters play in the novel depends on the degree to which they are presented as Indies or European. The keyword is 'self-control', a trait which is equated with a person's level of civilization in the colonial discourse. The characters represented as dark-skinned do not have any self-control. Roos and her mother argue, eat and gamble away without worrying for a second about the consequences. Roos, for instance, eats her fill of *ketoepat* and *kwee-kwee* (rice snacks and pastries), but at the same time, thinks she cannot help her corpulence. The narrator remarks about this: 'It was her usual comment; if she'd only knew a way to fight her corpulence ... People had provided her with many remedies in the course of time; she had never used one!'.<sup>69</sup> This is typical for all dark-skinned characters in the novel: they are unable to control events and have no influence on the course of their life. Eventually, the Uhlstra family is ruined morally and financially because of their uncontrolled behaviour, and they end up in the native village. As the story progresses, the family members get more and more excluded from European culture, and slowly but steadily, they transform from blurred copies of Europeans to exact copies of natives. Their development even seems to be a matter of reversed or regressive mimicry; they *verindischen* (turn Indies; synonymous to degeneration) to such a degree that, in the end, they can no longer be distinguished from the colonized. The final point of this process is the so-called *verinlandsen* (going native) — a state of ultimate assimilation (or, in this case, degeneration) at which Europeans

eventually dissolve into the native population. The original distinction between colonizer and colonized is abandoned, symbolized by the family's relocation to the *kampong*.

Lena Lugtens, on the other hand, is represented as light-skinned, and she constitutes a paragon of European standards and values. She is 'a pretty, sensible, thoroughly sweet and decent girl' who has an 'unimpeachable and unselfish nature'.<sup>70</sup> She even has a civilizing effect on others. For instance, she is able to financially save her mother — who fell into a spiral of degeneration — and keep her out of the *kampong*. In the end, she selflessly gives up her dowry (which her mother has largely gambled away already anyway), to pay off her mother's gambling debts.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, she is said to be 'clean, pure, and perfect as a white lily on a dung heap; all the filth running through the large family brushed past her, spattering her, without smearing her even the slightest'.<sup>72</sup> In this exceptional case, a Eurasian character can ascend (based on skin colour and the associated level of civilization) to the rank of the *totoks*. Lena is no blurred copy, but an exact copy of the metropolitan ideal of beauty and civilization. Her mimesis is complete: she can pass as pure-blood, and she is credited with all related positive qualities. She is an exception to the rule, however, and she assumes a double role: on the one hand, she undermines the colonial discourse of white supremacy (she exemplifies that, in exceptional cases, a Eurasian can evidently possess the supposed superior white qualities); on the other hand, she functions as a vehicle of the colonial discourse which perpetuates and reinforces metropolitan standards and values.

The degenerating Indies or civilising European influence also affects the characters keeping company with the Uhlstras or Lugtens, respectively. An example of this are the brothers Freddy and Eddy Markens, born in the Indies but to Dutch parents. Freddy marries dark-skinned Roos Uhlstra, and Eddy marries light-skinned Lena Lugtens. The brothers have the same hereditary starting point, however, they come to quite different ends. Here, the circumstances assert themselves. Freddy *verindischt* under the influence of his Eurasian in-laws and is socially ruined together with them; whereas Lena, represented as European, turns Eddy into a 'virtuous' man who, in the beginning, is utterly lazy and only after Lena's dowry.<sup>73</sup> For the first time in his life, he seeks employment, he sincerely begins to love Lena, and, under her influence, he perceptibly transforms into an honest, hardworking European:

With his past he had long since broken. For years now he lived as a truly exemplary young man; no one doubted his steadiness; he was stronger and fitter than ever; his constitution, restored to rest and peace, and *being good and healthy by nature*, had redressed itself.<sup>74</sup>

Accordingly, in *Ups & Downs*, white characters, the light-skinned Eurasians included, are equated with reason, selflessness and civilization; they are physically and mentally healthy. Furthermore, these characteristics are presented as natural or innate to Europeans, as can be read from the quotation above. In contrast, the dark-skinned Eurasian characters and those affiliated with them are associated with physical and mental degeneration. Their social downfall and loss of rank is portrayed as a result of their uncontrolled and unreasonable behaviour. The Indies circumstances, in which the characters find themselves, exacerbate the moral and social decline, just as the European circumstances can reverse it.

Despite Daum's humanitarian attitude towards Eurasians in his life as a journalist, *Ups & Downs* reveals a metropolitan view on miscegenation demonstrating the power of social imaginaries — as Stoler calls them — when it comes to romancing the Indies. In this novel, the characters' fate — in accordance with naturalist practice — is decided by a combination of race and circumstances. Miscegenation is a negative factor which entails loss of status for Eurasian characters, as well as for those who are drawn into their affairs. For Eurasian characters goes: the darker the colour of their skin, the further removed they are from civilization and the blurrier a copy of a full-blood European they are. In the novel, representations of Eurasians are used to demonstrate the supposed superiority of the white race and to legitimate the colonial presence of the Europeans in the Indies: left to their own devices, the Eurasian characters (the one practically white exception left aside) hardly achieve anything, neither in moral nor in social terms, and they require the help of white characters (or those represented as such). In this way, the *totok* is represented as the self-evident master in the Indies; a person of alleged moral duty to civilize so-called inferior or less evolved subjects — the aforementioned 'white man's burden'. It is tempting to read *Ups & Downs* as a period document that, when compared to Melati van Java's novel that was published sixteen years earlier, reflects the increasing racist views and racial segregation within the Indies society. These racial representations, however, are widespread and can be found across the whole of nineteenth-century colonial literature.<sup>75</sup>

### Melati van Java's social-feminist outlook

The second novel I would like to discuss was written by Melati van Java, pseudonym of the Eurasian Nicolina Maria Christina Sloom (1853–1927). She was born in the Indies to a Dutch father and a Eurasian mother. According to biographer Vilan van de Loo, Sloom was the most widely read female novelist from the late-nineteenth century.<sup>76</sup> Her oeuvre contains dozens of books, and her novels were popular with a large Dutch reading public. Sloom received a lot of literary recognition for a long time — for example, she was among the first female authors admitted to the prestigious *Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde* (Society of Dutch Literature) in 1893. Furthermore, in her literary work as well as in her personal life, she advocated the emancipation of women. Therefore, her books frequently feature female protagonists. In many cases, these protagonists are even women of Eurasian descent.<sup>77</sup> This also goes for *Fernand* (1874), a feminist social novel. Although the title leads one to believe otherwise, the novel does not so much concern Fernand, a Eurasian, but the four Eurasian women determining his life. These women originate from the colonial elite and are all connected to each other in one way or another: Ida is Nora's and Theodore's mother; Nora grows up in the Netherlands with her mother Ida; Theodore grows up in the Indies with her grandmother, Mrs Van Vaerne; Antoinette is Fernand's mother and she grew up in the Indies with Mrs Van Vaerne as well, after her own mother died at a very young age.

In contrast to the previous novel, in *Fernand* the colour of the skin of the Eurasian characters is hardly mentioned, if at all. One time, it is noted about Antoinette that she

has 'a warm complexion, that would make her appear Italian rather than Eurasian'.<sup>78</sup> About Theodore, we read that she has 'delicate, white hands' and about Nora that she is of a 'darker [brown]' than Fernand.<sup>79</sup> We do not find out how dark or light Fernand's or Ida's skin colour is. Hence, their classification as Eurasian cannot be told from their physical description, but must be inferred from the family-history of the characters. Furthermore, the characters' skin colour hardly says anything about them, because it is not associated with innately positive or negative qualities. All Eurasian characters are portrayed as civilized, regardless of their physical appearance. Antoinette for example, proves herself a strict but loving mother, devoting herself fully to the upbringing of her son. Under her guidance, Fernand climbs higher on the social ladder: he earns a doctorate in Literature, and besides that, he is appointed mayor of a village in the Netherlands — a title and position requiring superior faculties of reason and judgement, qualities that in Dutch colonial literature were usually reserved for *totoks*. Ida and Nora are exemplary housewives, inexhaustibly labouring in their family home. Theodore is very independent, and she does whatever she wants; she travels by herself to and through Europe, for example. She may be called 'peculiar' and 'an eccentric, foolish girl' by other characters, but this is attributed to her emancipatory views and not to racial factors.<sup>80</sup>

The representation of Eurasian characters in *Fernand* does not rely on racial attributions and references to a possible connection between skin colour and certain levels of civilization are absent. Instead, their qualities are ascribed to their upbringing. This also explains why they are so civilized: they originate from the highest colonial circles and have all received a European upbringing. Whenever the white characters make a racial attribution, it is rejected and refuted by a Eurasian character immediately. Theodore's Dutch grandmother, for example, blames her granddaughter's strong personality on her Eurasian origins, as the opening quotation of this article conveyed. Theodore, however, holds her upbringing responsible which she received mainly from her Dutch grandparents: 'my mother has had no fault in my upbringing [...] leave her out of it'.<sup>81</sup> Here, upbringing and personality are directly linked to each other. Moreover, the narrator supports this view by stating that Mrs Van Vaerne 'forgot to mention, however, that Theodore was the product of her system of upbringing'.<sup>82</sup> Accordingly, in this novel, the image of Eurasians as racially blurred copies is negated, and the hereditary-biological paradigm is replaced by a social-pedagogic model for the explanation of intrinsic qualities and behaviour of characters.

When it comes to level of civilization, they can compete with the *totok*, but in some cases, their appearance betrays their mixed origin, as a result of which they are treated as blurred copies by white characters. When Nora and her siblings go to school for the first time in the Netherlands, they are called 'oriental monkeys' and 'Nips'.<sup>83</sup> They are discriminated against by their Dutch classmates on the basis of their outward appearance. Fernand hastens to help them and criticizes the behaviour of his classmates:

Tis a disgrace, that you would attack this couple of poor foreign things with the lot of you. [...] the boys of our school should be smarter, or it would be better for them to return to nursery school.<sup>84</sup>



From the Dutch schoolchildren's perspective, Eurasians are a deviation of the metropolitan racial norm: they are interpreted as 'the same but not quite/white'. This, apparently, is experienced as threatening, because by calling them names, the Dutch children distance themselves from Nora and her family. This racist way of thinking and behaving is radically rejected in the novel and blamed on the infantile behaviour of the classmates. Hereby, racism is put aside as a childish phenomenon that one should not exhibit: who does so, should have been smarter and loses social prestige. Hence, the novel takes an explicit stand against racism and discrimination against Eurasians.

*Fernand* not only maintains a different view on racial issues, but also on gender, as it is a feminist social novel. Antoinette and Theodore are emancipated characters who are valued positively: they are represented as self-empowered women who take control over their own lives. They are independent and do not see marriage as the highest goal in a woman's life. Antoinette, for example, was in an unhappy marriage and, despite her youth and beauty, refuses to remarry after the death of her husband.<sup>85</sup> Theodore is reputed to be 'an emancipated girl'. She breaks off her engagement to a certain Verheide because she 'cannot be happy with an ordinary domestic life'.<sup>86</sup> Antoinette and Theodore lead happy lives, and they do not care about the people surrounding them who think they are 'eccentric' because of their opinions and lifestyles.<sup>87</sup> Ida and Nora, however, are presented as submissive and docile. They comply with the prevailing standards for women and, as a consequence, lead an unhappy life. They suffer under the yoke of their insensitive and indifferent husband or father, respectively. As a result, they grow old prematurely and lose their joy of living. Fernand, for example, calls them 'two wilted China roses, [...] the one has already had her bloom, the other will probably never have hers'.<sup>88</sup> Marriage is not unquestioningly presented as the primary goal in life for women, and those who avoid it, are usually better off than those who marry in the novel.<sup>89</sup>

In *Fernand*, the Eurasians are in no way inferior to white Europeans. When it comes to civilization, ways of thinking and behaving, they often even form an example for the other characters (this is particularly true for Antoinette's and Ida's Dutch husbands who are depicted as being cruel). Consequently, the Eurasian characters take up an ambivalent position: on the one hand, they embody the metropolitan ideal of civilization and possess the qualities associated with it; on the other hand, their outward appearance and/or their family-history betray(s) their mixed origins which makes them more difficult to interpret for the other characters. The novel as a whole, however, is very clear about this. The narrator always takes the side of the Eurasian characters, and focalization lies almost entirely with them. The reader hardly gets any insight in the perceptions of other characters, and when their perspective is focalized, it often serves to illustrate their racist and sexist notions. As a result of this, it is easier for the reader to sympathize with the Eurasian characters and their ideas. Hence, this novel has subversive potential, because it negates the existing literary representation of Eurasians as blurred copies. Simultaneously, however, the novel leaves the metropolitan standard of civilization unchallenged (civilization now being brought within reach of Eurasians by means of upbringing, and no longer being reserved for the white race).<sup>90</sup>

Although Sloom does not take up a critical position with regard to the supposed superiority of metropolitan culture or the colonial system and remains loyal to the colonial ethos, she does offer a critical view on social relations with respect to Eurasians. It is tempting to hold Sloom's Eurasian background responsible for her view on miscegenation and to consider her literary imagery as an example of a colonially-generated discourse that counterpoises the metropolis-imposed discourse on Eurasians. In nineteenth-century Dutch colonial literature, however, Sloom represents a minority point of view. *Fernand* is a rare case that entirely abandons biological-racial thinking in the portrayal of Eurasians. By far, the majority of colonial authors reflect Daum's view on miscegenation. Of course, one could argue that Indies novels were largely produced by white and often European-born authors;<sup>91</sup> therefore, they must reflect the racist attitudes of that day that corroborate white colonial supremacy. However, even the literary texts by Eurasian, and often Indies-born authors, prove to be interspersed with metropolitan notions about mixed race. Miscegenation takes up an important part in the course of the characters' lives and is often made responsible for their decline.<sup>92</sup> Once more, such racial representations demonstrate the power of social imaginaries that apparently represented a 'mental reality' in which Eurasians could (almost) exclusively be imagined by a number of negatively-connoted features that were considered to be characteristic of their 'nature' and that were attributed to their 'mixed' origins.

## Conclusion

In Bhabha's view, 'mimicry' (copying, imitating) and 'mockery' (caricaturing) lie very closely together, and he considers mimicry as a strategy to offer resistance to the colonial discourse.<sup>93</sup> In our case, however, it is debatable to what extent the discussed authors intentionally use this strategy. It is important to keep different levels in mind, to wit the levels of the author, of the characters and narrator, and of the text as a whole.

Daum's intention as author of *Ups & Downs* was to describe the society of the Indies as objectively as possible. However, his perception, was strongly coloured by nineteenth-century metropolitan ideas about race and miscegenation, confirming the supposed superiority of the white European. At level of the characters, the Eurasians are caricatured as blurred copies of the white European — the narrator standing at the ready to point out the Eurasians' flawed thoughts and behaviour. These characters do not intentionally undermine the colonial discourse: they may be hopelessly *verindischt* (degenerated) in looks, mind, and behaviour, but as members of the European community they do not in any way question the supposed metropolitan superiority and the resulting standard of civilization. At the level of the text, however, they do actually put the colonial discourse to the test. They occupy an ambivalent position in this discourse and function in a Janus-faced fashion: on the one hand, they are the degenerated opposite of the *totok*, hence, they form the confirmation of his supposed superior qualities; on the other hand, they are representatives of the European community, and, therefore, they undermine the colonial discourse. In these characters, a crumbling of the white supremacy and a potential disruption of the colonial relations becomes visible (of which

the merging into the native population of some Eurasian characters — who also drag down the white characters among their close acquaintances in their downward spiral of moral and social decline — constitutes an utter nightmare for the survival of European supremacy in the East). This is an unintended effect of the text; although mimicry may have an undermining effect on the colonial discourse at the level of the novel, it is not intentionally and strategically employed by the author as such.

Furthermore, I would like to add: the more subtle the mimicry and the greater the likeness of the blurred copy to the original, as the more threatening it is interpreted. Civilized Eurasians, such as the Eurasian characters from *Fernand*, also undermine the discourse of white supremacy. Sloots' intention was to show that Eurasians are not inferior to white Europeans. Therefore, she described the colonial world from a social-emancipatory perspective, bringing civilization within reach of Eurasians. At the level of the characters, her Eurasians are a threat to the colonial discourse, not because they constitute a parody or a caricature, but because they have managed to completely conform to the metropolitan ideal of civilization — the narrator siding with the Eurasian characters and always justifying their views and way of life. Consequently, they are hardly distinguishable copies of the idealized white European and can no longer be dismissed as blurred copies. Although these characters have no intention to question the metropolitan standard of civilization or its supposed superior status, they do undermine the colonial discourse at the level of the text. The Eurasian characters unintentionally make it necessary to reassess the position of the *totok* and his mission in the Indies: because they can compete with him when it comes to morals and manners, he loses his monopoly on civilization, and the 'white man's burden' is put under pressure. As another unintended effect, the text reveals the ideological paradox on which the colonial discourse is based; on the one hand, colonization is represented and legitimated as a mission of civilization; on the other hand, succeeding in this mission leads to loss of metropolitan supremacy and causes the colonial enterprise to perish by its own 'success'.

Accordingly, Eurasians constitute an unstable and subversive group which, by its presence within the European community, undermines the colonial discourse — be it as passive agents of resistance who endorsed the colonial ethos and would not question the colonial system (the Eurasians in the discussed novels included). In colonial imagination, however, they were seen as a threat to colonial relations that needed to be neutralized. This was achieved by dismissing them as 'other' (as half-blood or pseudo-Europeans) and, in that way, distinguishing them from the white or full-blood Europeans. Literary representations make an essential contribution to the establishment of such images; if Eurasians are described over and over again by words and images that emphasize their 'being different' (mostly in terms of inferiority), then readers could get the impression that this is an essential characteristic of Eurasians. In this respect, the influence of literature on the perception of Eurasians in the colonial era must not be underestimated. Many works of this literary body were originally written in the Indies; in many cases, however, they were published by a Dutch publisher and for a Dutch reading public to inform and educate those who stayed behind in the Netherlands about life in the Indies — particularly about its vices and virtues that, as demonstrated, were closely connected to racial imagery.<sup>94</sup>

Therefore, Dutch colonial literature was not only a source of representation, but, simultaneously, it constituted a representative force that made an essential contribution to the establishment of and to maintaining the colonial imagination and underlying ideas about white supremacy. Hence, Indies novels informed a widespread literary discourse that not only significantly helped to shaping the image of the Indies, but that was also a powerful agent in perpetuating the imaginary fears of miscegenation by bringing them to life through fiction, and thus, enforcing the emotional economy of race.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Melati van Java, *Fernand*, ed. by Vilan van de Loo (Leiden: KITLV, 2009), p. 137. Original quotation: 'Wat zijn dat voor kuren, ik kan dat mokken niet verdragen, dat doen alleen inlandse kinderen, dat heb je zeker van je moeder overgeërfd'. Whereas the term leads one to believe otherwise, 'inlandse kinderen' commonly referred to children of Eurasian descent at that time. For a glossary of Indies terminology in English, see Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben, *Being 'Dutch' in The Indies: A History of Creolisation and Empire, 1500–1920*, transl. by Wendie Shaffer (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2008), pp. 344–47.
- <sup>2</sup> Theodore (instead of 'Theodora') was quite common as Dutch girl's name in those days.
- <sup>3</sup> 'Race' can be understood in two ways: (1) As metaconcept considering race as a social construct that has no biological-scientific ground, but that is however of great social significance and does have consequences for individual members of a society; (2) As historic term relating to a biological category and as supposedly embedded in someone's genetic layout or 'nature'. Here, I will use race and appendant terminology in this second meaning. Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe (ed.), *Mixed Race' Studies: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 8–9, and D. Parker and M. Song, *Rethinking 'Mixed Race'* (London: Pluto Press, 2001), pp. 3–4.
- <sup>4</sup> Mary Kemperink, *Het Verloren Paradijs: De Literatuur en de Cultuur van het Nederlandse Fin De Siècle* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), pp. 85, 100, Joep Leerssen, *Nationaal Denken in Europa: Een Cultuurhistorische Schets* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999), p. 115, and Solange Leibovici, 'Zuiverheid als Utopie: De Foute Kinderen van Pasteur', in *De Hang naar Zuiverheid: De Cultuur van het Moderne Europa*, ed. by Rob van der Laarse and others (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1998), pp. 85–122 (p. 93).
- <sup>5</sup> Ulbe Bosma and others, *De Geschiedenis van Indische Nederlanders* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2006), p. 45.
- <sup>6</sup> Witnessing the number of Eurasians in the European community that in terms of percentage exceeded the number of white Europeans in the second half of the nineteenth century, the habit of acknowledging so-called *voorkinderen* (pre-children) from a relationship between a Dutch man and his native concubine, and finally the introduction of the Nationality law in 1892. Ulbe Bosma, 'The Indo: Class, Citizenship and Politics in the Late Colonial Society', in *Recalling The Indies: Colonial Culture and Postcolonial Identities*, ed. by Joost Coté and Loes Westerbeek (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2005), pp. 67–98 (p. 71), Bosma and others 2006, pp. 147–148, 154–155, H. W. van den Doel, *Het Rijk van Insulinde: Opkomst en Ondergang van een Nederlandse Kolonie* (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1996), p. 179.
- <sup>7</sup> C. Fasseur, 'Hoeksteen en Struikelblok: Rasonderscheid en Overheidsbeleid in Nederlands-Indië', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 105 (1992), 218–42 (p. 223).
- <sup>8</sup> Leerssen 1999, p. 115 and Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), pp. 79–80.
- <sup>9</sup> For more information on literature as source of representation and performative power, see Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 66.
- <sup>10</sup> Joost Coté, 'Romancing the Indies: The Literary Construction of *Tempo Doeloe*, 1880–1930', in *Recalling The Indies: Colonial Culture and Postcolonial identities*, ed. by Joost Coté and Loes Westerbeek (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2005), pp. 133–72 (p. 133).
- <sup>11</sup> Jacqueline Bel, 'Losbandigheid, Geldzucht en Goena-Goena: De Receptie van Indische Romans in Nederland aan het Eind van de Vorige Eeuw', in *Indisch-Nederlandse Literatuur: Dertien Bijdragen voor Rob Nieuwenhuys*, ed. by Reggie Baay and Peter van Zonneveld (Utrecht: H&S 1988), pp. 129–47 (p. 129), and Olf Praamstra, 'De Omstreken Bloei van de Indisch-Nederlandse Letterkunde: Een Afbakening van het Corpus', *TNTL* 113 (1997), 257–74 (p. 268).
- <sup>12</sup> Bel 1988, pp. 129–47 (pp. 136, 140). Original quotation from a Dutch literary critic, cited by Bel: 'omdat het genre zo'n onverbloemd beeld van de [Indische] werkelijkheid geeft'.
- <sup>13</sup> Coté 2005, pp. 133–72 (p. 134).

- <sup>14</sup> Not to be mistaken for 'going native'. The adjective 'Indies' refers to hybrid forms of European and Indonesian culture.
- <sup>15</sup> Bosma and Raben 2008, p. xvii.
- <sup>16</sup> In 1870, 80% of the European population in the Indies was considered Eurasian; in 1900, this was 67%. Bosma 2005, pp. 67–98 (p. 71), and Bosma and others 2006, pp. 147–148.
- <sup>17</sup> Reggie Baay, *De Njai: Het Concubinaat in Nederlands-Indië* (Amsterdam: Athenaeum-Polak & Van Genneep, 2008), pp. 19–21, Bosma 2005, pp. 67–98 (p. 69), Bosma and others 2006, p. 154, Van den Doel 1996, p. 179, Frances Gouda, 'De Vrouw in Nederlands-Indië: Van Mestiezencultuur naar Europese Cultuur', *Indische Letteren*, 20 (2005), 3–12 (p. 3), Tessel Pollmann, *Bruidstraantjes: En Andere Indische Geschiedenissen* (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 1999), p. 10, and W. F. Wertheim, *Het Rassenprobleem: De Ondergang van een Mythe* (Den Haag: Albani, 1948), p. 99.
- <sup>18</sup> Gouda 2005, pp. 3–12 (p. 3), Nicole Lucas, 'Trouwverbod, Inlandse Huishoudsters en Europese Vrouwen', in *Vrouwen in de Nederlandse Koloniën*, ed. by Jetske Reijs and others, *Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis*, 7 (Nijmegen: Sun, 1986), pp. 78–97 (pp. 82–84, 88), Pollmann 1999, pp. 9–11, and P. W. J. van der Veur, *Introduction to a Socio-Political Study of the Eurasians of Indonesia* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cornell University, 1955), pp. 90–91.
- <sup>19</sup> Term originating from Jean Gelman Taylor, 'Europese en Euraziatische Vrouwen in Nederlands-Indië in de VOC-tijd', in *Vrouwen in de Nederlandse Koloniën*, ed. by Jetske Reijs and others, *Jaarboek voor Vrouwengeschiedenis*, 7 (Nijmegen: Sun, 1986), pp. 10–33 (p. 10), and Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (Wisconsin, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), pp. xxvi, 71.
- <sup>20</sup> Baay 2008, pp. 36, 48, Bosma 2005, pp. 67–98 (p. 72), Gouda 2005, 3–12 (pp. 5–9), Janny de Jong, 'Een Nederlandse 'Minderheid' in den Vreemde: De Europese Samenleving in Nederlands-Indië in de Negentiende en Twintigste Eeuw', in *Vreemdelingen Ongewenst & Bemind*, ed. by Arend Huussen jr and others (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1991), pp. 27–36 (pp. 29–31), and Van der Veur 1955, p. 88.
- <sup>21</sup> This was connected to scientific discourses on race and miscegenation, but it was not exclusively a racial phenomenon.
- <sup>22</sup> Gouda 2005, 3–12 (pp. 5–9), and De Jong, pp. 27–36 (pp. 29–31). A. van Marle has extensively studied the European population in the Indies, in terms of origin and growth, and demonstrated that per 1000 European men there were 471,6 European women in 1880, 542,5 European women in 1890 and 635,9 European women in 1900. A. van Marle, 'De Groep der Europeanen in Nederlands-Indië: Iets over Ontstaan en Groei', *Indonesië*, 5 (1951/52), 97–121, 314–41, 481–507, respectively (pp. 320–321).
- <sup>23</sup> Gelman Taylor 2009, p. 157, Gouda 2005, 3–12 (pp. 5–9), Lucas 1986, pp. 78–97 (p. 82), Van Marle 1951/52, pp. 97–121, 314–41, 481–507 (pp. 320–321), and Van der Veur 1955, pp. 88–89.
- <sup>24</sup> Stoler 2010, pp. 55–60. The white male on the other hand, was not seen as the guardian of racial purity. The sexuality of the European man was beyond dispute and had to be steered in the 'right' direction. Therefore, for a long time, a sexual relationship with a native concubine was considered a necessary evil, and concubinage was an intrinsic part of colonial 'budjang-society' (society of bachelors) that had to protect white men from 'misconduct', such as visiting prostitutes, homosexual acts and masturbation. Marrying a European woman was at any time preferable to a concubinage, but was not in store for every European man, due to a shortage of European women in the Indies. For more information on the composition of the European community in the Indies, see Van Marle 1951/52, pp. 97–121, 314–41, 481–507, respectively (pp. 320–321).
- <sup>25</sup> Stoler 2010, pp. 33–4, 55–60.
- <sup>26</sup> Bosma and Raben 2008, p. xv.
- <sup>27</sup> Bosma and Raben also criticize the use of terms like 'mestizo' or 'hybrid' that are widely used in Anglophone discourse on colonialism, including Stoler's work, because the terminology stems from biological notions that suggest and sustain the *idée fixe* of racial and cultural purity. The Dutch scholars contest the assumption that the colonial balance of power defined all aspects of life, and that hybridization was a deviation from the colonial norm. Ulbe Bosma and Remco Raben, *De Oude Indische Wereld: 1500–1920* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2003), p. 10.
- <sup>28</sup> Remco Raben, 'Ambiguities of Reading and Writing', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 165 (2009), 556–59 (p. 559).
- <sup>29</sup> Over the course of years many of those lives of successful Eurasians have been studied by e.g. Bosma and Raben 2003, and Gelman Taylor 2009.
- <sup>30</sup> Ann Laura Stoler, 'Thinking Through Colonial Ontologies' in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 165 (2009), pp. 562–67 (p. 565).
- <sup>31</sup> Bosma and Raben 2003, p. 34, and Stoler 2010, p. 52.
- <sup>32</sup> Coté 2005, pp. 133–72 (pp. 135, 136).
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid. (p. 163).
- <sup>34</sup> Patrick Dassen and Mary Kemperink (ed.), *The Many Faces of Evolution in Europe, c. 1860–1914* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), pp. ix–xxii (p. ix). For an overview of such views and publications, see Kemperink 2001, pp. 100–8, Leerssen 1999, pp. 113–8, and Piet de Rooy, 'De Flessenhals van de Wetenschap: Opvattingen over 'Ras' rond de Eeuwwisseling', *Feit en Fictie*, II (1996), 48–64 (pp. 54–62).

- <sup>35</sup> Kemperink 2001, pp. 85, 100, Leerssen 1999, pp. 112–113, 118, Leibovici 1998, pp. 85–122 (p. 93), De Rooy 1996, 48–64 (pp. 48–49, 63), and Frank van Vree, 'Ras, Volk en Cultuur: Andere Perspectieven op Wetenschappelijke Tradities', in *Volkseigen: Ras, Cultuur en Wetenschap in Nederland 1900–1950*, ed. by Martijn Eickhoff and others (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2000), pp. 11–31 (pp. 15–18).
- <sup>36</sup> Bosma and Raben 2003, p. 217, Kemperink 2001, pp. 27, 81, 108, Leerssen 1999, p. 111, Leibovici 1998, pp. 85–122 (pp. 94, 100), Van Vree 2000, pp. 11–31 (pp. 15–16), W. F. Wertheim, *Het Sociologisch Karakter van de Indo-Maatschappij* (Amsterdam: Vrij Nederland, 1947), pp. 11–13, and Wertheim 1948, pp. 10–12, 36.
- <sup>37</sup> Original quotation from the *Arnhemsche Courant*, cited in *De Locomotief*, 27 March 1876: 'Als de kleur alleen de kleur ware, [...] Maar de kleur is niet enkel de kleur; de zwarte en de gele man zijn van een ander ras dan de blanke man. In de gaven van geest en verstand staat de zwarte man ver beneden den blanken'.
- <sup>38</sup> See *On the Origin of Species* (London: Murray, 1859). Darwin however was not the only one who developed an evolutionary theory; evolutionism was quite in vogue in the second half of the nineteenth century, and was put forward by many scientists, including Robert Chambers, Ernst Haeckel, Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, Charles Lyell, B. A. Morel, Herbert Spencer and Alfred Russel Wallace. Dassen and Kemperink 2005, pp. ix–xi, xiv–xv, xx–xi.
- <sup>39</sup> Dick van Galen Last, 'Rassenhygiëne: De Dodelijke Omhelzing van Wetenschap en Nationaal-Socialisme', in *Volkseigen: Ras, Cultuur en Wetenschap in Nederland 1900–1950*, ed. by Martijn Eickhoff and others (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2000), pp. 213–47 (p. 217), and Kemperink 2001, pp. 101–102.
- <sup>40</sup> S. R. Steinmetz, 'De Rassenkwesie', *De Gids*, 25 (1907), 104–39 (p. 138). Original quotation: 'Ons expres, opvoedend ingrijpen kan zeker een factor in die geschiedenis worden, en dus zijn wij tot die opvoeding verplicht. [...] Wij, Nederlanders, hebben op dit gebied eene kolossale taak te vervullen'.
- <sup>41</sup> Leerssen 1999, p. 115.
- <sup>42</sup> Kemperink 2001, pp. 96–97, Leibovici 1998, pp. 85–122 (pp. 101–102), and De Rooy 1996, pp. 48–64 (pp. 55–56).
- <sup>43</sup> W. H. Cox, 'De natuurkeus bij den mensch', *Tweemaandelijksch Tijdschrift voor Letteren, Kunst, Wetenschap en Politiek*, 1895 II, 188–214 (p. 206). Original quotation: 'De lage trap, waarop zoo vele kruislingen staan, [is] gedeeltelijk een gevolg [...] van terugslag tot een wilden toestand, door kruising teweeggebracht'.
- <sup>44</sup> Original quotation from the *Arnhemsche Courant*, cited in *De Locomotief*, 29 March 1876: 'Het overwicht der blanken, [...] wordt uitsluitend in stand gehouden door den gestadigen aanvoer van versche Europeesche grondstof [...] de inboorlingen overgroeien het Europeesche element en zouden het verstikken, wanneer niet geregeld, door gestadige aanvoeren, dit Europeesch element aangevuld, ververscht, in stand en op zijne sterkte gehouden werd'.
- <sup>45</sup> Cox 1895, pp. 188–214 (p. 210). Original quotation: 'Hoe scherper de natuurkeus, des te hooger stijgt het gemiddelde van den mensch'.
- <sup>46</sup> Steinmetz 1907, pp. 104–39 (p. 139). Original quotation: 'Een geamalgameerd mensdom lijkt mij wel haast zeker eene verarmende beschaving, eene verzwakking van menschenleven te beteekenen'.
- <sup>47</sup> *De Sumatra Post*, 07 March 1899 and 26 January 1900, respectively. Original quotations: 'alweër schraler en ziekelijker uitziende dan de ouders' and 'Ze hebben niet de deugden, wel de ondeugden van beide rassen', respectively.
- <sup>48</sup> See his (at that time) pioneering study *Orientalism* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1978).
- <sup>49</sup> Concepts by Homi K. Bhabha and Mary Louise Pratt, respectively. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), and Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2008).
- <sup>50</sup> Bhabha expounded these concepts in his essay 'Of Mimicry and Man'. Bhabha 1994, pp. 121–31.
- <sup>51</sup> A term derived from biology. *The Oxford English Dictionary* describes mimicry as follows: 'the action or skill of imitating someone or something, especially in order to entertain or ridicule. In biology; the close external resemblance of an animal or plant (or part of one) to another animal, plant, or inanimate object'. Consider for example a chameleon, who is able to adapt its colour to its surroundings.
- <sup>52</sup> Bhabha 1994, pp. 127–28.
- <sup>53</sup> The state-funded research project on the history of *Indische Nederlanders* could be considered as an example of this increasing interest. It resulted in a threefold book publication: Bosma and Raben 2003; Hans Meijer, *In Indië Geworteld* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2004) and Wim Willems, *De Uittocht uit Indië* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2001).
- <sup>54</sup> Gert Oostindie, *Postkoloniaal Nederland: Vijfenzestig Jaar Vergeten, Herdenken, Verdringen* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2010), pp. 260–65.
- <sup>55</sup> Elleke Boehmer and Sarah de Mul (ed.), *The Postcolonial Low Countries: Literature, Colonialism, Multiculturalism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), p. 11.
- <sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6–9.
- <sup>57</sup> Bel 1988, pp. 129–47 (p. 131), Coté 2005, pp. 133–72 (p. 137), and Gerard Termorshuizen, *P. A. Daum: Journalist en Romancier van Tempo Doeloe* (Amsterdam: Nijgh & Van Ditmar, 1988), pp. 15–16.
- <sup>58</sup> Witnessing the scathing article he wrote about the 'unrealistic' (as he saw it) novels from the Indies in his time in *Het Indisch Vaderland* on 15 September 1883 and the literary manifesto he published previous to *Uit*



de *Suiker in de Tabak* (*From Sugar to Tobacco*), his first naturalist Indies novel from 1885, largely included in Termorshuizen 1988, pp. 203–7 and pp. 212–213, respectively.

<sup>59</sup> Petra Boudewijn, 'Over Donkere Dochters, Indische Dames en 'n Blanke Lelie: De Representatie van Indo-Europeanen in 'Ups' & 'Downs' in *het Indische Leven* van P. A. Daum', *Indische Letteren* 25 (2010), 220–35.

<sup>60</sup> For more information on the naturalist novel in the Netherlands, see Ton Anbeek, *De Naturalistische Roman in Nederland: Synthese — Stromingen en Aspecten* (Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers/Wetenschappelijke Uitgeverij, 1982).

<sup>61</sup> P. A. Daum, 'Ups' & 'Downs' in *het Indische Leven*, ed. by Gerard Termorshuizen, *Verzamelde romans*, III (Amsterdam: Nijgh & Van Ditmar, 1998), pp. 403–754 (pp. 467 and 430, respectively). Original quotation: 'net een inlandse vrouw' and 'knappe Indische dame', respectively.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (pp. 419 and 422, respectively). Original quotation: 'dikke figuur in een wijde slobberkabaai' and '[die] even incorrect als vloeiend Hollands [spreekt]', respectively.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (p. 490). Original quotation: 'licht Indische toon'.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (pp. 645 and 647, respectively).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (p. 409). Original quotation: 'dat *als* hij er dan toch een zou willen nemen zó donker, die veel gemakkelijker en minder kostbaar onder de inlandse bevolking was te vinden'.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (p. 663). Original quotation: 'de kampong in 't verschiep'.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (p. 435). Original quotation: 'zonder enige schijn der inlandse herkomst van moederszij'.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (pp. 580 and 622, respectively). Original quotation: 'mooie blonde haar', 'grote diepblauwe ogen' and 'roze-blanke blondinen [uiterlijk]', respectively.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (p. 599). Original quotation: 'Het was haar gewone zeggen; zo ze slechts 'n middel wist om haar corpulentie te bestrijden ... Men had haar vele middelen aan de hand gedaan in de loop van de tijd; ze had er nooit een toegepast!'.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (pp. 607 and 704, respectively). Original quotation: 'een knap, verstandig, door en door lief en fatsoenlijk meisje' and 'onbesproken en onbaatzuchtige aard', respectively.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (pp. 695–96).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (p. 706). Original quotation: 'schoon, rein en onberispelijk, als 'n blanke lelie op 'n mestvaalt; al het vuil, dat door de grote familie liep, ging rakelings langs haar heen, haar bespattend, zonder haar ook maar in 't minst te besmetten'.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (p. 665).

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 403–754 (p. 713, italics mine). Original quotation: 'Met zijn verleden had hij reeds lang gebroken. Hij was nu al jaren een werkelijk voorbeeldig

levende jongeman; aan zijn soliditeit twijfelde geen mens; hij was krachtiger en gezonder dan ooit; zijn tot rust en regel gekomen gestel, goed en gezond van nature, had zich geredresseerd'.

<sup>75</sup> For more information on the stock images of Dutch colonial literature, see e.g. Coté 2005, pp. 133–72.

<sup>76</sup> Vilan van de Loo, "Het Eeuwig Verzinnen van Allerlei Histories, waaraan Tegenwoordig toch Niemand meer gelooft": Melati van Java en de Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde', *Nieuw Letterkundig Magazijn*, 31 (2013), 7–11 (p. 7).

<sup>77</sup> Editor Vilan van de Loo in an introduction to Van Java 2009, pp. 7–16 (pp. 7–9, 11).

<sup>78</sup> Van Java 2009, p. 28. Original quotation: 'een warme tint, die haar eerder voor een Italiaanse dan een Indische zou doen aanzien'.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 134 and 22, respectively. Original quotation: 'fijne, blanke handen' and 'bruiner', respectively.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 121 and 132, respectively. Original quotation: 'zonderling' and 'een excentriek, dwaas meisje', respectively.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 137. Original quotation: 'Mijn moeder heeft geen schuld aan mijn opvoeding gehad [...] laat haar er maar buiten'.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 180. Original quotation: '[Mevrouw van Vaerne] vergat echter op te merken dat Théo het voortbrengsel van haar opvoedingssysteem was'.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 23. Original quotation: 'Oosterse apen' and 'Japannees', respectively.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 24. Original quotation: "'t Is schande, dat jullie zo'n paar vreemde stumperds met je honderden aanvalt. [...] de jongens van onze school moesten wijzer zijn, of anders was 't beter dat ze naar de bewaarschool gingen'".

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., pp. 200–5.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., pp. 121 and 153, respectively. Original quotation: 'een geëmancipeerd meisje' and '[zij] kan niet tevreden zijn met een gewoon huiselijk leven', respectively.

<sup>87</sup> In this respect *Fernand* bears a remarkable resemblance to *Een Huwelijk in Indië* (*A Marriage in the Indies*), a famous feminist social novel by Mina Krüseman that was published a year earlier, in 1873. This novel presents Lina, a self-willed character who is called 'excentrique' as well by the other characters, because of her liberal upbringing and unconventional ideas. In this novel too, the 'eccentric' characters lead happier lives than the 'conventional' ones, who are weighed down by an unhappy and incompassionate marriage. Mina Krüseman, *Een Huwelijk in Indië*, ed. by Vilan van de Loo (Leiden: KITLV Publishers, 2009).

<sup>88</sup> Van Java 2009, p. 68. Original quotation: 'Twee verwelkte Indische rozen [...] de ene heeft haar bloeitijd reeds gehad, de andere zal ze waarschijnlijk wel nooit meer krijgen'.

<sup>89</sup> Sloot however does not go as far as Krüseman who, in her literary work as well as in her personal life, propagated living together with a man without being



married as the preferable relationship. See e.g. Olf Praamstra, *Een Feministe in de Tropen: De Indische Jaren van Mina Kriiseman* (Leiden: KITLV, 2003).

<sup>90</sup> It is impossible to assess whether this subversive potential also applies to the native population, or if civilization is reserved for Europeans only, because indigenous characters hardly play a role of importance in the novel. Further research on this topic in Sloot's oeuvre might be fruitful.

<sup>91</sup> Coté 2005, pp. 133–72 (p. 134).

<sup>92</sup> This is shown in my dissertation on the literary representation of Eurasians in colonial (and postcolonial) literature from the Dutch East Indies that I am presently preparing, and of which this article is a corollary. For some preliminary findings on literary representations by Eurasian colonial novelists, see Petra Boudewijn, 'Het Bloed kruipt waar het niet gaan kan:

Verboden Interraciale Relaties in de Indische Literatuur uit het Fin De Siècle', in *Taboe en Verbod*, ed. by Hans Vandevoorde and others, Rythmus: Jaarboek voor de Studie van het Fin De Siècle 3 (Hilversum: Verloren, 2014), pp. 23–38.

<sup>93</sup> Bhabha 1994, p. 123.

<sup>94</sup> Praamstra 1997, pp. 257–74 (p. 270). Rob Nieuwenhuys — who is generally considered as the founding father of Dutch colonial literary history — suggests that this literature has more or less developed from the so-called *brief naar huis* ('letter sent home' from the colony). Rob Nieuwenhuys, *Oost-Indische Spiegel: Wat Nederlandse Schrijvers en Dichters over Indonesië hebben geschreven vanaf de Eerste Jaren der Compagnie tot op Heden*, 3rd edn (Amsterdam: Querido, 1978), p. 12.

## Notes on contributors

Petra Boudewijn is currently finishing her PhD project at the University of Groningen. She researches the representation of Eurasians (in Dutch: Indo-Europeanen) in Dutch colonial and postcolonial literature. Also, she examines the origins of these literary images and how such imagery, in turn, contributes to shaping social imaginaries of race. She has published in *Spiegel der Letteren* and *Indische Letteren* (among others). Her project is funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research.

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Correspondence to: Petra Boudewijn, Department of Modern Dutch Literature, University of Groningen, PO Box 716, 9700AS Groningen, The Netherlands. Email: [petra.boudewijn@gmail.com](mailto:petra.boudewijn@gmail.com)